

Hobbies

Biggest U.S. gold coin auction ever set in Beverly Hills

By Roger Boye

A fabulous collection of U.S. gold coins will go on the auction block in Beverly Hills, Calif., beginning Feb. 25 in what could prove to be the biggest such sale in U.S. history.

Experts say the 600-coin hoard—to be sold in two parts—could bring as much as \$30 million in winning bids, a remarkable average of nearly \$50,000

The stamps column will resume in next week's issue.

per coin. The collection includes an example of almost every proof gold piece made by Uncle Sam from the 1850s to 1915.

"Each coin is in near-perfect state of preservation. Each is fresh and bright and unblemished," reads a brochure prepared by Superior Galleries of Beverly Hills, which will conduct the auctions Feb. 25 and in November. California collector Edward

Trompeter, who owns the rarities, told a *Coinage* magazine writer that he got interested in old coins years ago as he visited flea markets and shows.

"Coins were rather intriguing, and you could put them away in a safe place; they didn't take too much room," he told *Coinage*. "For instance, a classic automobile, where are you going to store it?"

Ira Goldberg, an owner of Superior, has predicted that one of Trompeter's items—a 1907 \$20 gold piece with extremely high relief—could become the first coin to bring more than \$1 million at public auction when it is sold in November. The current record of \$990,000 for an 1804 U.S. silver dollar was set in a 1989 Chicago auction.

A few of Trompeter's treasures were displayed at the American Numismatic Association convention in suburban Rosemont last summer.



A copper-nickel coin depicting a postage stamp has won "Coin of the Year" honors from Krause Publications and its bi-weekly *World Coin News*.

The so-called "Penny Black" crown from the Isle of Man was

the overwhelming choice of judges, garnering rave reviews for its innovative coinage concept, according to Albert "Bo" Smith, the newspaper's publisher.

"Penny Black" made its debut in Great Britain in 1840 as the world's first adhesive postage

stamp. It depicted Queen Victoria and was sold for one penny to help support mail delivery.

The winning coin—which features a pearl-black finish—commemorates the stamp's 150th anniversary in 1990.